

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON

September 14, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW

We face the question of whether or not we should prepare to call up by the 15th of October about four National Guard Divisions. The argument for it is that this would make possible a shipment of four Divisions to Europe without leaving a hole in our reserve military strength at any time. The President now has the authority without declaring a national emergency to call up about 150,000 more men. The problem raised by such a call-up now are two: First, we have not yet made the decision as to whether to ship four divisions to Europe. If we decide ultimately that this is not necessary, the call-up will have proved needless. Second, the call-up in itself raises the level of domestic and foreign tension. Unless we are convinced that it is necessary, we shouldn't do it as a preparatory measure.

It is expected that it will take two months to ship the divisions to Europe. As of now, the time from first call to combat readiness for the National Guard divisions is estimated to be three months. Without the call-up, the divisions would get two extra days' training per week under present arrangements until they were called up. If the decision to ship divisions were made on 1 November, the National Guard divisions would thus have achieved twelve days of training, leaving 78 days required for getting to full readiness. If we assume that 1/4 the strength of the four divisions being shipped is available in the U.S. during the two months of shipment, that represents another two weeks' time of four divisions. Thus, the net deficiency is two months. It seems to me well worthwhile to look hard at the question: Can't we afford a two-month hole in our strategic reserve capability in the U.S. in order to avoid making a commitment to ship the four divisions until it is absolutely necessary.

Carl Kaysen CK